

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 H-01 INR-05 L-01 PM-03 PA-01

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SAJ-01 EUR-08 IGA-01 RSC-01 /052 W

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R 270539Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0181

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

S E C R E T BANGKOK 01450

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, VS, VN

SUBJ: SOVIET DIPLOMATIC POLLING ON VIETNAM

1. A FRENCH JOURNALIST TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR JANUARY 24 THAT MOSCOW HAD A FEW MONTHS AGO ASKED SOME 30 TO 35 OF ITS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO TAKE LOCAL POLLS ON TWO TOPICS. THEY WERE: THE SURVIVABILITY OF THIEU AS PRESIDENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF AMERICAN MILITARY RESPONSE TO STEPPED-UP FIGHTING THERE. THE CANVASSING APPARENTLY RESULTED IN THE JUDGMENT THAT THIEU WAS TOTTERING; AND THAT THE U.S., WITH NO FURTHER TROOP PRESENCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM, WAS INDIFFERENT TO ITS FATE. IN ANY EVENT, THE U.S. WOULD NOT USE ITS THAI AND SEA-BASED AIRCRAFT IN RETALIATION FOR STEPPED UP NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY ACTION IN THE SOUTH.

2. THE SOVIETS THEN INCREASED THEIR MILITARY AID TO NORTH VIETNAM, NOT INCIDENTALLY TO BE ONE UP ON THE CHINESE. HANOI ATTACKED PHOUK LONG PROVINCE, AMONG OTHER TARGETS IN SOUTH

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VIETNAM. THE SOVIETS AND THE NORTH VIETNAMESE MADE ANOTHER

ERROR OF JUDGMENT. BOTH MOSCOW AND HANOI ARE SURPRISED TO SEE THIEU HOLDING ON, AND, ALTHOUGH THE U.S. AIR FORCE REMAINS LEASHED, THEY ARE ALSO WITNESSING PRESIDENT FORD ASKING CONGRESS FOR A SUPPLEMENTAL MILITARY AID APPROPRIATION FOR SOUTH

VIETNAM.

3. COMMENT: THE JOURNALIST, WHO LIVED TWO YEARS IN HANOI, EMERGED FROM THAT EXPERIENCE NO LONGER CONVINCED OF THE PURITY OF NORTH VIETNAMESE MOTIVES IN INDOCHINA. HE MAINTAINS CONTACTS, HOWEVER, WITH SEVERAL COMMUNIST SOURCES WHO LOOK ON HIM AS ONE OF THE CONVERTED. HE RETAINS A HEALTHY FRENCH SKEPTICISM ABOUT MANY POLITICAL TOPICS, BUT PARTICULARLY REALIZES THE CONSTANT MISJUDGMENT THAT HANOI AND ITS PRINCIPAL ALLY MAKE ABOUT ATTITUDES IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND IN THE UNITED STATES.

KINTNER

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NNN

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